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Message Text

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60
ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 /071 W
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R 121400Z MAR 75
FM AMCONSUL CASABLANCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3351
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMCONSUL TANGIER
AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L CASABLANCA 180

ALGIERS FOR SEARING

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, MO
SUBJECT: POLITICAL WATERSHED FOR UNFP/UMT

1. SUMMARY: UNFP HELD IMPORTANT MEETING REGIONAL LEADERS CASABLANCA MARCH 9. PRINCIPAL SUBJECTS DISCUSSED WERE PARTY'S RESPONSE TO KING'S INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS AND RECENT SUSPENSION OF DAILY PAPER OF UMT, UNFP'S TRADE UNION ALLY. UNFP/UMT DELIGHTED WITH DELAY IN ELECTIONS AND IS READY TO NEGOTIATE WITH REGIME ON PARTICIPATION IN ANTICIPATED NEW GOVERNMENT - IF INVITED. POSSIBILITY THAT UNFP MAY NOT BE ASKED PARTICIPATE IN NEXT CABINET AND CONTINUED SUSPENSION UMT PAPER GIVE UNFP/UMT LEADERS GROUNDS FOR CONCERN THAT THEY MAY BECOME ISOLATED AND FORCED INTO POSITION OF INCREASED OPPOSITION TO REGIME. END SUMMARY.

2. UNION NATIONALE DES FORCES POPULAIRES (UNFP) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MET IN CASABLANCA MARCH 9 WITH PARTY'S REGIONAL
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LEADERS. SESSION WAS CHAIRED BY PARTY SECGEN ABDALLAH

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IBRAHIM WITH UNION MAROCAINE DU TRAVAIL (UMT) HEAD MAHJOUB
BEN SEDIK PLAYING MAJOR ROLE. FOLLOWING IS DISTILLATION
OF SUBSTANCE SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS WITH UNFP/UMT LEADERS.

3. MAIN PURPOSE MEETING WAS TO EXPLAIN VIEWS OF IBRAHIM AND
BEN SEDIK ON KING HASSAN'S THRONE DAY SPEECH MARCH 3.
(HASSAN, TO NO ONE'S SURPRISE, ANNOUNCED THAT PARLIAMENTARY
ELECTIONS WOULD BE INDEFINITELY POSTPONED AND INDIRECTLY
APPEALED TO LEADERS OF POLITICAL PARTIES TO PARTICIPATE IN
A NEW GOVERNMENT.) UNFP/UMT HAS CONSISTENTLY OPPOSED EARLY
ELECTIONS AND HAS ADVOCATED FORMATION OF A TWO-YEAR REFORM
GOVERMENT COMPOSED OF "MEN WORTHY OF RESPECT" TO PREPARE
HONEST ELECTIONS. IBRAHIM AND BEN SEDIK, CONVINCED NEW
GOVERNMENT SOON TO BE FORMED, ARE ACCORDINGLY HIGHLY PLEASED
WITH THIS MOST RECENT TURN OF EVENTS.

4. SINCE IBRAHIM'S SOLITARY REFUSUAL TO COOPERATE IN KING'S
DIPOLOMATIC CAMPAIGN LAST SUMMER OVER SPANISH SAHARA, HE
HAS HAD VIRTUALLY NO ACCESS TO HASSAN AND HAS BEEN POLITICALLY
ISOLATED. NOW THAT HIS AND BEN SEDIK'S BASIC DEMANDS APPEAR
TO HAVE BEEN MET (FOR WHATEVER REASONS) THEY ARE NOW PREPARED
OPEN DIALOGUE WITH REGIME. PROBLEM IS THAT AS OF MARCH 10
THEY HAVE YET TO BE ASKED TO TALK WHEREAS OTHERS REPORTEDLY
HAVE. ONE KEY UMT LEADER HAS EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT UNFP/
UMT HAS SO ALIENATED KING IN RECENT PAST THAT IT WILL SIMPLY
BE IGNORED AS EVENTS DEVELOP.

5. UNFP/UMT'S SITUATION IS FURTHER COMPLICATED BY THE
CONTINUED SUSPENSION OF UMT'S DAILY NEWSPAPER AS RESULT OF
PAPER BLATANTLY IGNORING THRONE DAY. UMT HAS BEEN ASSURED
SUSPENSION WAS PERSONAL DECISION OF AN ENRAGED KING WHO,
THEY SAY, IS CAPABLE OF BEARING A GRUDGE FOR A LONG TIME.
SITUATION IS MADE NO BETTER BY FACT THAT UMT CHOSE TO
OFFEND ROYAL SENSITIVITIES ON VERY DAY WHEN KING ANNOUNCED
POLITICAL MOVES THAT UNION AND UNFP ALLIES HAD LONG ADVOCATED.
FINALLY, WHILE KING REPORTEDLY RESPECTS IBRAHIM HE DETESTS
BEN SEDIK - AND PAPER IS OWNED BY UMT.

6. AT THIS JUNCTURE UNFP/UMT CAN DO LITTLE MORE THAN WAIT,
BOTH FOR OPENING OF POLITICAL DIALOGUE AND FOR LIFTING OF
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PAPER'S SUSPENSION. BOTH ARE ISSUES OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE
AND FAILURE TO REACH ACCOMMODATION ON BOTH RISKS FORCING
IBRAHIM AND BEN SEDIK INTO POSTURE OF MORE STRIDENT OPPOSITION
THAN HAS BEEN THE CASE IN LAST SEVERAL YEARS.
BRUBECK

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